

Personnel

INTRODUCTION

A characteristic of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families is the involvement of professionals from multiple disciplines working collaboratively as a team to meet the needs of the child and family, guided by the resources, concerns, and priorities of the family as related to the development of the child.

The qualifications for the various personnel who may provide services in First Steps, Kentucky's Early Intervention System (KEIS), under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Part C, are based on the highest requirement in Kentucky applicable to the person's specific profession or discipline, as required by 34 CRF 303.361. This means that personnel in a specific profession or discipline must hold the highest entry-level academic degree needed for approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that the Kentucky legislature has either enacted or has authorized a State agency to promulgate through rules to establish entry-level standards for employment in that profession or discipline. All personnel must maintain standards consistent with any certification, licensure, registration, or other comparable requirement in Kentucky applying to the profession or discipline in which the person is providing early intervention services.

In addition to listing the qualifications required of the various personnel that may provide services in First Steps and providing guidelines for meeting those qualifications, this section delineates the roles of each discipline and service provider. Roles for the various disciplines were identified through broad-based research and through feedback from professional associations and licensing boards in Kentucky, university faculty, and practitioners, as well as from Kentucky's Early Intervention System Interagency Coordinating Council (KEIS-ICC).

The delineation of the roles for professionals and paraprofessionals providing early intervention services in Kentucky is based on two premises. The first premise is that a common body of knowledge and skills is applicable to infant/toddler services and is required by professionals or paraprofessionals from any discipline. Knowledge of typical and atypical development in infancy and skills in functioning as a member of a team are examples of this generic core. Thus, personnel in First Steps are generalists in that they share knowledge of key concepts and skills in key practices. In addition, some roles in early intervention require certain knowledge and skills, but do not require that a certain discipline perform them. These also are viewed as general roles.

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The second premise is that no one discipline is able to provide all the services or possess all the expertise required to meet the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. Early intervention personnel come from a variety of professions and have received highly specialized training in their particular field. Therefore, in addition to possessing a common base of knowledge and skills in the field of early intervention, personnel also are specialists within that field who possess knowledge and skills specific to the practice of their own discipline.

Thus, personnel need both a common framework of knowledge particular to the uniqueness of early intervention practices as well as training and expertise specific to a discipline. Roles of all providers, both professionals and paraprofessionals, are to be performed within the expertise, discipline, and scope of licensure or certification (if applicable) of the team member.

In addition, this section delineates the qualifications and roles for providers in the First Steps system for which no specific degree, certification, or licensure exists for the particular type of service being provided (e.g., service coordination). These services may be performed by personnel from a variety of disciplines if the provider of the service possesses the specific qualifications delineated for the type of service being performed and if the provider is able to fulfill the roles specific to that type of service as well as the general roles which all personnel must fulfill.

Finally, all personnel providing services in First Steps must be approved by the Cabinet for Health Services.

REFERENCES

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